IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 to 3, 5 to 8 and 10 to 15 as follows. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended) A storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, and has a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus and a communication interface with the information processing apparatus, comprising:

a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium;

~~input~~ receiving means for receiving an ~~inputting~~ eject instruction of ejecting the storage unit from the information apparatus; ~~and~~

judging means for judging whether or not the storage unit is in an ejectable state; and

output means for externally outputting an eject permission signal to the information apparatus if said judging means judges that the storage unit is in the ejectable state ~~in accordance with input of the eject instruction~~.

2.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 1, wherein the storage unit further comprises:

state shift means for shifting the storage unit to ~~an~~ the ejectable state when the eject instruction is ~~input~~ received by said ~~input~~ receiving means,

and wherein said judging means judges that the storage unit is in the ejectable state after completion of the shift to the ejectable state by said shift means

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~~said output means externally outputs the eject permission signal upon completion of the shift to the ejectable state by said state shift means~~.

3.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 2, wherein said state shift means inhibits reception of an external input to the communication interface, and executes ~~cash content~~ cache memory flash processing.

4.   (Original) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said output means uses an extra signal line in the communication interface.

5.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said ~~input~~ receiving means ~~inputs~~ receives an eject command as the eject instruction via the communication interface.

6.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said ~~input~~ receiving means ~~inputs~~ receives a status of an operation switch as the eject instruction via an extra signal line in the communication interface.

7.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said ~~input~~ receiving means further comprises:

switch ~~input~~ receiving means for ~~inputting~~ receiving a status of an operation switch;[[,]] and

notification means for notifying the information processing apparatus via the communication interface of an operation status of the operation switch on the basis of the status of the operation switch that is ~~input~~ received by said switch ~~input~~ receiving means.

8.   (Currently Amended) The unit according to claim 2, wherein

said ~~input~~ receiving means can ~~input~~ receive, as the eject instruction, an eject command issued by the information processing apparatus and a signal from an operation switch, and

when the signal from the operation switch is ~~input~~ received as ~~an~~ the eject instruction ~~signal~~, said state shift means shifts the storage unit to the ejectable state at end of data communication between the information processing apparatus and the storage unit.

9.   (Original) The unit according to claim 6, wherein the operation switch is arranged in the storage unit.

10.   (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus which allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 1, comprising:

providing means for providing a user interface;

issuing means for issuing the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with user operation to the user interface; and

eject means for ejecting the storage unit on the basis of ~~an~~ the eject

permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject

instruction.

11.   (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus which

allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 7, comprising:

monitoring means for inquiring of the storage unit as to a status of the ~~an~~

operation switch, and monitoring a status signal representing the status of the operation

switch;

issuing means for issuing the eject instruction to the storage unit in

accordance with user operation to a user interface provided by software or the status signal;

and

eject means for ejecting the storage unit on the basis of ~~an~~ the eject

permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject

instruction.

12.   (Currently Amended) An eject control method for a storage unit

which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, and has a storage medium

for storing data from the information processing apparatus, ~~and~~ a communication interface

with the information processing apparatus and a controller for controlling storage of data

into the storage medium, comprising:

a providing step of causing the information processing apparatus to provide

a user interface;

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an issuing step of issuing an eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with user operation to the user interface;

a state shift step of shifting the storage unit to an ejectable state in accordance with the eject instruction issued in the issuing step;

an output step of causing the storage unit to output an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus after completion of shifting the storage unit to the ejectable state in the state shift step, in accordance with the eject instruction; and

an eject step of causing the information processing apparatus to eject the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 12, wherein the method further comprises:

an acquisition step of inquiring of the storage unit as to an operation status of a switch connected to the storage unit, thereby acquiring the operation status, and

wherein in the issuing step, the information processing apparatus issues the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with the user operation to the user interface provided by software and the operation status of the switch acquired in the acquisition step.

14.   (Currently Amended) A housing apparatus which allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 1, and which can be connected to a computer apparatus, comprising:

an interface which realizes data communication between the storage unit

and the computer apparatus;

transmission means for transmitting the eject instruction from the computer

apparatus to the storage unit; and

an eject mechanism which ejects the storage unit in accordance with ~~an~~ the

eject permission signal from the storage unit.

15.   (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein

the apparatus further comprises:

an eject designation switch, ~~and~~

wherein said transmission means transmits the eject instruction to the

storage unit in accordance with operation ~~on~~ of said eject designation switch.